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Medicaid Program to Assist the Working Disabled Signed into Law

Wednesday, July 2, 2003 – “Michigan Freedom to Work for Individuals with Disabilities Law” was signed into law today announced Sen. Shirley Johnson (R-Royal Oak) The law allows disabled individuals who are currently on Medicaid to earn more than the current Medicaid income limits, without the loss of medical coverage.

“It’s about time we have a Medicaid system that allows people with disabilities to become taxpaying contributors to this state and not be forced to be public assistance dependent,” said Johnson. “Access to health care is essential for those with disabilities to obtain and keep a job.”

Senate Bill 22 allows individuals with disabilities to earn up to 250 percent of federal poverty level before having to contribute to Medicaid premiums. Individuals enrolled in the Michigan Freedom to Work for Individuals with Disabilities Law can accumulate assets up to \$75,000 combined with retirement, IRA and 401K accounts and earn income above the current Medicaid specified eligibility. In addition, workers may take temporary breaks in employment for medical reasons or as a result of involuntary layoff.

The law follows last years Medicaid Buy-In Task Force which included legislators; Michigan employers; and representatives from the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns; the MiJob Coalition; the Benefits, Planning, Assistance and Outreach Program; the Department of Community Health; the Department of Career Development; the Department of Management and Budget and finally the Senate Fiscal Agency. However, more importantly, the Task Force consisted of workers with disabilities as a means of providing the most valuable information.

“We have created a win-win situation for both the business community and the working disabled,” said Johnson. “People with disabilities will no longer have to live in poverty in order to receive essential medical care through Medicaid.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: A photo of Senator Johnson and Gov. Jennifer Granholm celebrating can be found at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire.